



# Jesus, the Light of the World - Part 1

## Lesson 14 John 8:12-59

### REVIEW

1. In last week's lesson, we saw Jesus as the Liberator for the spiritually thirsty and the shamefully treated.
2. We studied the heart-touching story of Jesus freeing the adulterous woman from her accusers and from her sin.

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

1. Today we will study two of the "I Am" statements of John and the truths these statements reveal about Christ.
2. Related to these claims, we will also study the dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees, which gives us a better understanding of the reasons behind their hostility toward Christ.
3. As we move through this chapter, we will see how the truths of Christ's claims and the rejection of the Pharisees both relate to our lives today.

### JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD FOR THOSE IN SPIRITUAL DARKNESS (8:12-59)

#### A. The claim of Jesus - 8:12

**8:12** "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

#### 1. The setting

- a. Time. After the Feast of Tabernacles
- b. Location. In the Temple

- i. "Again Jesus took up His discourse in the Temple...He still sat in the court of women, sometimes called the Treasury (7:20). The court was a thoroughfare to that of the Israelites on a different level fifteen steps above it. He had the day before applied to Himself one of the miracles of the Exodus, that of the water poured out in libations. To give water to drink was a common phrase for teaching and explaining the law. Now, He applies to Himself the type of the fiery pillar. The great golden candelabra were close beside Him, fifty cubits high and sumptuously gilded. Every night these lights were lit and shed their soft light all over the city. Here, the people joined in festive dances to the sound of the flutes and other music and the Levites chanted the Songs of Degrees. Such a scene had been acted, doubtless, the night before and was fresh in their memories."<sup>1</sup>
- ii. "During Tabernacles...large lamps in the temple's court of women were lit and an exuberant nightly celebration took place under their light with people dancing through the night and holding burning torches in their hands while singing songs and praises. The levitical orchestras also played. Jesus took this opportunity of the lighting celebration to portray another spiritual analogy for the people: 'I am the light of the world.'"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 284.

<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 1598.

- c. People present
  - i. Jesus
  - ii. The people who had gathered in the Temple - 8:2
  - iii. Pharisees - 8:13

2. The claim itself

- a. He claimed to be God, *"I am"*. This is the second "I Am" statement in John. - 6:35
- b. He claimed to be *"the light of the world"*
  - i. This metaphor is used of God throughout the Old Testament  
**Exodus 13:21-22; 14:19-25; Psalm 27:1; Ezekiel 1:4; Habakkuk 3:3-4**
  - ii. The Messiah's coming would be a time of light - **Isaiah 60:19-22**
- c. He claimed *"he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*
  - i. *"Followeth"* means "to join one as a disciple, to become or be his disciple; to side with his party"<sup>3</sup> It "conveys the idea of someone who gives himself completely to the person followed."<sup>4</sup>
  - ii. *"Light of life"* is also used in 1:4. In that verse, *"light"* and *"life"* are seen as interchangeable.
- d. "In this sublime claim we come to a decisive place. It will not do to praise Jesus and deny his deity. Only as the son of God can we justify and accept this language which otherwise is mere conceit and froth."<sup>5</sup>

B. The Pharisees denied the validity of His claim - 8:13

**8:13** "The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true."

1. *"Thou bearest record of thyself"*

- a. Perhaps they were referring to Jesus' own argument in 5:31
- b. The Old Testament law required more than one witness to establish truth  
**Deuteronomy 19:15**

2. *"Thy record is not true."* In their minds, His witness wasn't true to begin with, but they argue on the basis of "you don't have another witness to your claim."

C. Jesus defended His claim - 8:14-18

**8:14** "Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. **15** Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. **16** And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. **17** It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. **18** I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

1. *"My record is true"* - 8:14

- a. "Even if I bear record of myself, it is true"
- b. "I know where I came from"
- c. "I know where I am going"

<sup>3</sup> Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 22, ref. 190.

<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, 1598.

<sup>5</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament*, Vol. 5 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932), 141.

- d. "You have no idea who I am"
  - i. "Where I came from" is His pre-existence and coming from the Father
  - ii. "Where I am going" - 7:33
- 2. "My judgment is true" - 8:15-18
  - a. "Your judgment is impaired" - 8:15
    - i. "You judge according to the flesh"
    - ii. "You are only seeing my witness, but there is a greater witness" - 5:37-38
  - b. "The Father testifies of me" - 8:16
  - c. "Having two witnesses satisfies the law" - 8:17-18
- D. The argument over Fathers - 8:19-59
  - 1. The first question of the Pharisees - 8:19a
 

8:19a "Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father"
  - 2. Jesus' first answer- 8:19b-21
 

8:19b "Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. 20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come. 21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."

    - a. "You don't know me" - 8:19
    - b. "You don't know my Father"
    - c. "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also" - 8:19, 14:8-9
    - d. "I go my way...whither I go, ye cannot come" - 8:21
      - i. It speaks of His death, resurrection and ascension to the Father
      - ii. He tells them they can't come with Him because of their sins
    - e. Jesus' answer obviously upset them as John speaks of their desire to lay hands on Him again in verse 20
  - 3. The second question of the Pharisees - 8:22
 

8:22 "Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come."
  - 4. Jesus' second answer - 8:23-24
 

8:23 "And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."

    - a. "Ye are from beneath; I am from above" - 8:23
    - b. "Ye are of this world; I am not of this world." "The contrast...here is between the earthly (sensual) and the heavenly...These proud rabbis had their origin in the world of darkness (1:9) with all its limitations. 'I am from above' is a complete contrast in origin and character."<sup>6</sup>
    - c. "If ye believe not that I am *he* [the light of the world who came from the Father], ye shall die in your sin" - 8:24

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 146.

5. The third question of the Pharisees - 8:25a

8:25a "Then said they unto him, Who art thou?"

6. Jesus' third answer - 8:25b-29

8:25b "And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning. 26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. 27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. 28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. 29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

a. "The same that I said unto you from the beginning" - 8:25b

b. "God sent me, and he is true" - 8:26

c. They didn't understand He was speaking of the Father - 8:27

d. "I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him" - 8:26

e. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man [His crucifixion], then shall ye know"

i. "That I am he" (sent from God) - 8:28

ii. "I do nothing of myself" (equality with God in power) - 8:28, 5:19

iii. "I speak only the things the Father has taught me"

iv. "God is with me" - 8:29

v. "I only do the things that please Him"

7. The Response - 8:30-59

a. Some Jews believed - 8:30-32

8:30 "As he spake these words, many believed on him. 31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

i. Their belief came as a result of hearing His words - 8:30

ii. Jesus' instructions to them

a) Discipleship is defined as continuing in the words of Christ - 8:31

b) Believers can experience freedom in their lives from sin's power by

1) Continuing in His word

2) Knowing the truth of Christ - 8:32

3) Without continuing in His word, you can't know the truth. Without the truth, you won't be free. Without continuing in His word, you won't be free from sin's power.

b. Some Jews refused to believe - 8:33-59

i. The Jews' first argument - 8:33

8:33 "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

a) "We be Abraham's seed" (their faith was in their Jewish lineage)

b) "We 'were never in bondage to any man'." This is simply not true, for they had been in bondage.

ii. Jesus' first rebuttal - 8:34-38

**8:34** "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. **35** And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. **36** If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. **37** I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. **38** I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father."

- a) "You are enslaved to sin." The word "*servant*" means "a slave, one who gives himself up wholly to another's will or dominion"<sup>7</sup> - 8:34
- b) "You are a slave, not a son" - 8:35
- c) "If the Son frees you from sin, you are free indeed" - 8:36
- d) "I know your lineage, but because my word has no place in you, you seek to kill me" - 8:37
- e) "*I speak that which I have seen with my Father*" - 8:38
- f) "*Ye do that which ye have seen with your father*"

iii. The Jews' second argument - 8:39a

**8:39a** "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father."

iv. Jesus' second rebuttal - 8:39b-41a

**8:39b** "Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. **40** But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. **41a** Ye do the deeds of your father."

- a) "If you were the children of Abraham, you would do his works" - 8:39b
  - 1) Hebrews 11:8-19 tells us that Abraham looked to God by faith and desired "*a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city*" Hebrews 11:16
  - 2) Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ - 8:56
- b) "Your actions are contrary to Abraham's" - 8:40
- c) "Therefore, you do the deeds of your father, which is not Abraham" - 8:41a

v. The Jews' third argument - 8:41b

**8:41b** "Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God."

- a) "We are not born of fornication"
- b) "God is our Father"

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<sup>7</sup> Thayer, 158, ref. 1401.

vi. Jesus' third rebuttal - 8:42-47

**8:42** "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. **43** Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word. **44** Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. **45** And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not. **46** Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? **47** He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God."

a) "If God were your God, you would love me" - 8:42

1) "For I proceeded forth and came from God" means "to go or come out of." <sup>8</sup>  
Jesus is of the same substance as the Father.

2) "God has sent me"

b) "Ye cannot hear my word" - 8:43

c) "You are of your father, the devil, who is a perpetual liar" - 8:44

d) "You don't believe me because I tell you truth" - 8:45

e) His challenge

1) "Who convicts me of sin?" - 8:46

2) "If I say the truth, why don't you believe me?"

f) "You don't hear the words of God" - 8:47

vii. The Jews' fourth argument - 8:48

**8:48** "Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"

a) "You are a Samaritan"

b) "You have a devil"

viii. Jesus' fourth rebuttal - 8:49-51

**8:49** "Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. **50** And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. **51** Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

a) "I don't have a devil, but I honor the Father." "Honor" means "to value" <sup>9</sup> - 8:49

b) "Ye do dishonour me"

c) "I do not seek my own glory. There is one that seeks and judges (God)." - 8:50

d) "If you keep my word, you won't die." Jesus, therefore, seeks and judges and is God - 8:51

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 222, ref. 1831.

<sup>9</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1968), 310.

**ix. The Jews' fifth argument - 8:52-53**

**8:52** "Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. **53** Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?"

- a) "We know you have a devil" - 8:52
- b) "Are you greater than our father Abraham? Who do you make yourself out to be?" - 8:53

**x. Jesus' fifth rebuttal - 8:54-56**

**8:54** "Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: **55** Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. **56** Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad."

- a) "*If I honour myself, my honour is nothing*" - 8:54
- b) "My Father, your God, honors me"
- c) "I would be lying if I said I didn't know Him" - 8:55
- d) "*I know him, and keep his saying*"
- e) "Abraham rejoiced to see my day" (coming Messiah) - 8:56

**xi. The Jews' sixth argument - 8:57**

**8:57** "Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"

**xii. Jesus' sixth rebuttal - 8:58**

**8:58** "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

- a) "*Before Abraham was*" is His pre-existence
- b) "*I am*" is His self-existence (third "I Am" statement)

**E. The Response - 8:59**

**8:59** "Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

1. The Jews took up stones to kill Him
2. Jesus escaped because His time was not yet come

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**LIFE LESSONS**

1. For those in spiritual darkness, believe in the Lord and receive the "*light of life.*" Don't die in your sins.
2. As disciples of Christ, continue in His word.
3. Know that Jesus Christ is the eternally-existent God of Heaven!